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EDITORIALS

The Anomalous CIA

The *New York Times* series on the Central Intelligence Agency represents, as one might expect, a high level of journalistic competence, integrity and enterprise. For all its excellence, however, the series seems to have been organized around the wrong question, namely, do proper controls exist? To this question the authors of the survey—Tom Wicker, John W. Finney, Max Frankel, E. W. Kenworthy and other *Times* staff members—respond that whatever the situation may have been in the past, there is little evidence today that the CIA is making or sabotaging foreign policy or “otherwise acting on its own.” True, the survey points out that “the danger of its getting out of control of the Administration exists and ought to be taken seriously within and without the government. The Bay of Pigs stands as an enduring testimony to that fact.” But responsibility for the supervision and control of the agency, the authors feel, rests with the President, his highest advisers and the director of the CIA, not with Congress. In fact the problem of control can “only be met peripherally by Congressional oversight, and then with increased danger of security leaks and domestic political pressures on the agency.”

It seems to us that the facts recited in the survey call for a different conclusion. Over a period of nineteen years, according to the *Times*, at least 150 resolutions have been introduced in Congress—and then abandoned—calling for legislative control and supervision of the agency. Quite plainly, Congress has been deeply and persistently concerned about the CIA and has never ceased to feel that it should be brought under Congressional supervision and control. And the reason for this feeling is obvious: the CIA is an anomalous agency; it does not fit into the established constitutional pattern. If it were solely an intelligence agency designed to aid the President, then perhaps it could be said that it should be under his supervision and control and directly responsible to him. But it is many other things as well. It is, for example, an agency that carries out plans and projects, some of which fall under the heading of “black” operations or “dirty tricks,” including bribery, sabotage, slander (the Heine case on which we commented last week), armed insurrection, espionage, etc. These are warfare tactics; in fact the CIA in a sense grew out of, and succeeded to some of the functions of, the wartime OSS. In a word, the CIA is, in part, an arm of the Department of Defense. It is also an instrument of foreign policy, though not directly responsible to the State Department.

But what policies does it execute—those we publicly avow at the United Nations or those we privately pursue? *Newsweek* (May 9, p. 29) carries an intriguing story that would appear to link the CIA with an operation whereby planes were ferried to Portugal for use in Mozambique and Angola, in covert contravention of policies we had proclaimed at the UN. In addition, many of the CIA's activities have domestic implications: subsidies to universities, book publishers, magazines, etc. Senator Fulbright recently called attention to a new ramification of CIA influence. Should the agency be permitted to disseminate its own official statements and conclusions to the public in the guise

of independent scholarship? (Mr. Fulbright cited an article by George A. Carver, Jr., in the current issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Mr. Carver is identified as a student of political theory, with degrees from Yale and Oxford, a former officer in the U. S. aid mission to Saigon, and author—presumably this qualified him as an expert on the Vietcong!—of a tome entitled *Aesthetics and the Problem of Meaning*.)

Given these wide-ranging activities, which overlap several established departments, why should Congress have to accept the Administration's evaluation of the agency's performance? How can Congress understand and appraise the conduct of foreign policy without being fully advised about the work of the CIA? Initially the CIA had a budget of \$46 million; it now employs 15,000 persons and spends “about” \$500 million annually. How can Congress, in all conscience, in effect delegate to the President the power to determine the budget of such an agency? If the CIA is to be regarded as the private arm of the President, then the President must be held accountable not merely for everything it does—which can be bad enough—but for all that it is accused of doing. Every time a government topples in Zambia or a regime is overturned in Ghana, the first reaction of the world press is to blame the CIA. If Congress were fully advised, it might well decide to lop off the “dirty tricks” capers and confine the CIA to the business of gathering intelligence. In brief, to place exclusive reliance on the President and his advisers for the supervision and control of this secret agency is dangerously to extend the power of the Presidency and, by the same token, to diminish that of the Congress. What is needed is not a “watch dog” committee, that does not watch, but a select nine-member Senate committee—three from Armed Services, three from Appropriations, and three from Foreign Relations—of the type proposed by Senator Eugene McCarthy. Such a committee should conduct its own investigation of the agency, recommend whatever changes in structure and function seem desirable, and then establish procedures for airtight supervision and control.